



EXTENSION

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Oklahoma Home & Community Education has Big Impact

Whether it is raising funds to provide scholarships for 4-H Youth, planting trees to beautify the community or sewing thousands of cloth face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Oklahoma Home and Community Education group are ready to help.

Established in 1935, the group is celebrating its service to Oklahoma families and communities May 3-9 during Oklahoma Home and Community Education Week.

“Oklahoma Home and Community Education continues to go beyond their call to duty in communities across the state. We celebrate them and appreciate all that they do,” said Jorge Atilas, associate dean in Oklahoma State University’s College of Education and Human Sciences, and who also serves as the state adviser to the organization.

To date, members have made more than 35,000 facial masks to help communities cope with the pandemic.

“They truly impact lives, and OSU Extension is grateful to have such a great community partner in OHCE,” he said. “They take our research-based information and put it to work along with the local county Extension educators.”

Leslye Owen, OHCE president, said with a membership of nearly 3,400 across the state, the group’s community service makes a significant difference.

“Our members have a hand in so many different community events and activities, including community beautification, tutoring students, supporting veterans, providing educational scholarships and supporting local 4-H’ers and other groups,” Owen said.

Oklahoma Home and Community Education’s ultimate mission is to educate its members to be well-informed and able to handle changes in their homes and communities. Through its close relationship with OSU Extension, members bring that vision into reality by sharing research-based information on a wide variety of topics, including health, family and finances.

“We also play a vital role in communities because, especially in the smaller towns, there may not be very many resources available,” Owen said. “Oklahoma Home and Community Education is able to open up more resources and educational opportunities that can help many of our state’s families. It’s vital that we adapt to the changing world; we must stay relevant for our audience.”

Last year, the group contributed more than \$88,000 in scholarships funds to 4-H’ers and other students across the state. Members also reached more than 18,000 Oklahomans through educational programming, philanthropic projects and other activities. They provided \$21,000 in support to local community organizations and projects.

Kristy Spalding, Beckham and Washita Counties' Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Educator, serves as the adviser for the OHCE groups in Beckham and Washita Counties.

"OHCE Members have been busy sewing masks the last few weeks, but they have also participated in other projects," Spalding said. "A few of their past service projects have included sewing washable feminine pads for girls in Europe, sewing comfort pillows for post-surgery mastectomy patients, providing birthday cakes for several non-profit organizations, and donating items to foster care parents and individuals in need."

If you're looking for a place to meet people with similar interests and have a desire to help others, Oklahoma Home and Community Education might just be what you're looking for.

More information about OHCE is available on the organization's <https://humansciences.okstate.edu/fcs/ohce/> or contact Kristy Spalding at 580-660-0592 or kristy.spalding@okstate.edu.

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